WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT
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WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGER RETIRES AFTER 30 YEAR CAREER

Lakewood (March 2, 2021) – After a career spanning 30 years with the Water Replenishment District, General Manager Robb Whitaker has announced his retirement. Hired as Water Resources Engineer in 1991, Whitaker became District Engineer in 2000 and Assistant General Manager in 2001. He was appointed General Manager by the Board in 2003 and is the longest-serving General Manager in WRD's 61-year history.

"Under Robb Whitaker's leadership WRD has become a leader in regional water sustainability," said Congresswoman Grace Napolitano. "His vision has been a large part of Southern Los Angeles County's water future."

During Robb Whitaker's tenure the district completed its Water Independence Now (WIN) Initiative, a 15-year effort to implement a suite of programs and projects to make WRD completely independent of imported water for groundwater replenishment. Once one of the largest users of imported water in Southern California, WRD now meets its replenishment needs with a locally sustainable source of water.

"Virtually every legacy project or program completed by WRD was conceived, developed, or implemented by Robb Whitaker," Board President John Allen said. "His accomplishments in the past 30 years have laid the foundation upon which WRD will build for the next 30. WRD as an agency has been fortunate to have him. The people of the region and the state are lasting beneficiaries of his service."

The district's Safe Drinking Water and Disadvantaged Communities Programs were also developed during Mr. Whitaker's time as general manager. These programs have helped several small water systems access vital funding and technical assistance to allow them to remediate contaminated water in underserved communities.

"Robb Whitaker understood that access to clean and safe water shouldn't depend on your zip code," said Assemblymember Anthony Rendon. "When we wanted to make sure people served by

water systems in my district had clean water, I turned to Robb Whitaker and WRD. We worked together to make sure those systems had access to treatment programs."

Director Rob Katherman said, "Robb also led the successful effort to create a legal framework for the storage of groundwater, an accomplishment that enables what Robb coined the WIN 4 ALL initiative, a suite of programs and projects to eliminate the need for imported water in the region by 2040. Thanks to Robb, that vision is well underway.

"Robb's expertise as an engineer is complemented by an even temperament, an ability to communicate effectively, and the skill to manage complex projects from beginning to end. He has assembled an exceptionally talented staff of professionals that mirror those qualities and has provided a template to ensure that WRD is well-positioned going forward."

In July of 2020, Whitaker received the prestigious Excellence in Water Leadership award from the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA). This award recognizes those who have made a remarkable and visible contribution to the enhancement, protection or development of water resources in California. In announcing the award, ACWA President Steve LaMar said, "Robb has demonstrated remarkable leadership throughout his career, but especially with regard to the Water Independence Now Initiative. He is a visionary leader who has continually demonstrated excellence in professionalism and collaborative engagement."

In a letter to the Board this past September, Whitaker said he would stay on until March of 2021 to ensure as seamless a transition as possible.

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The Water Replenishment District (WRD) has managed and protected groundwater resources for 60 years. WRD manages two of the most utilized groundwater basins which provide half of the drinking water for over 4 million residents in 43 cities and unincorporated areas of southern Los Angeles County. Through WRD's Water Independence Now (WIN) Program, the District has developed a resilient and locally sustainable source of water for groundwater replenishment.